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ABSTRACT

This paper examines John Dewey's major educational thoughts and his influence on education from a dynamic-historical perspective. Dewey's marked and enduring influence on Chinese educational thought and practice is a central theme. The paper argues that because Dewey himself and his ideas grew and matured in a dramatically changing and developing social-historical context no simple-minded judgments should be made in regard to his educational thoughts. The analysis and discussions are presented in four sections: (1) John Dewey, a son of his times; (2) John Dewey, a fighter against dualisms; (3) John Dewey a resolver not perfect; and (4) John Dewey, a thinker welcomed and attacked in China. (Author/JD)

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A Re-examination of John Dewey and Education

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Abstract

This paper examines John Dewey's major educational thoughts and his influences from a dynamic-historical perspective. This author argues that Dewey himself and his ideas grow and mature in a dramatically changing and developing social-historical context so no simple-minded judgements should be made in regard to his educational thoughts. The analysis and discussions are presented in four sections: (1) John Dewey, a son of his times; (2) John Dewey, a fighter against dualisms; (3) John Dewey, a resolver not perfect; (4) John Dewey, a thinker welcomed and attacked in China.

A Re-examination of John Dewey and Education

INTRODUCTION

> "Rarely has Dewey been understood and he has often been misrepresented."
>
> — Emans, 1981.

There is no doubt that John Dewey is one of the most influential but controversial figures in the education field of the twentieth century. Encouraging permissiveness, anti-intellectualism, and pleasure-seeking are charges made against Dewey, a so-called progressive educator. However, he has been misunderstood. There are several reasons. As Berger (1959) pointed out, first, the obscurity of some of his writings led many to misunderstand him; second, there were many who, sincerely believing they were following the ideas of Dewey, brought forth new conceptions that contradicted or went far away from Dewey's own belief; finally, there are many who have attacked Dewey but never have bothered to read and examine his meanings.

In China, Dewey was always the attacked target both politically and educationally. The image of the man was misperceived because of politics. What he really said, what he stood for, and what the problems were to which he responded is often ignored or lost sight of. In recent years, in particular last year, we Chinese are striving for democracy and freedom, trying to better our nation politically, economically, and educationally. Therefore, Dewey as a great philosopher who once had great influence on China's politics and education due to his visit and Chinese students, needs to be reexamined. This is extremely important for our society in such a dramatic changing period.

Currently, there is apparently a renewed interest in the written works of Dewey. Let us hope that this time a better job will be done objectively rather than emotionally, by reading, analyzing, and synthesizing his ideas. What follows is my attempt towards understanding of John Dewey on education.

JOHN DEWEY, A SON OF HIS TIMES

> "We shall not understand either his revolt or the problems without understanding first the context within which both developed."
>
> --- Handlin, 1959.

In order to understand Dewey's ideas, we should not isolate the man from his times and the society in which he lived. He as other great thinkers was heavily influenced by his social and intellectual context. Dewey certainly matured in a certain social and intellectual milieu. His training in philosophy, the arising of a new and complex modern society, born of immigration, exploding population, and drastic social change definitely contributed to his thoughts. The emerging evolutionary doctrine, new scientific thought, and American public school movement all were influential factors in Dewey's development of both philosophy and educational ideas.

A great deal has been written regarding the social and philosophical milieu in which Dewey matured, and to which he reacted so violently (Archambault, 1964). His early training in Scotch commonsense philosophy at Vermont, and his introduction to the dynamism and continuity of Hegelianism as a graduate student at John Hopkins were early influences that nourished his thought. Influence of dialectical reasoning never left him. From Williams James he learned the principles

of the new functional psychology; from Charles Sandess Peirce the Darwinian framework of challenge, response, irritation and doubt that would serve as the basis for his theory of inquiry; from George Herbert Mead the importance of the new social psychology (Archambault, 1964; Dykhuizen, 1973). Perhaps more important were the social and intellectual context in which he lived and the "negative" conditions that he found around him. He began his educational labors in a context of far-ranging inquiry and controversy on Harbartian and Froebelian theories, problems of method, child study, and the whole matter of the scientific approach to education.

The American society in which he lived was under sweeping changes. The new American came in as on a floodtide. It marked the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, not only economically and politically but intellectually and psychologically (Weber, 1984). In the preface to his Democracy and Education (1916), Dewey wrote, "The philosophy stated in this book connects the growth of democracy with the development of the experimental method in the sciences, and the industrial reorganization, and is concerned to point out the changes in subject matter and method of education indicated by these developments."

This was a period of national consolidation following the Civil War. The expanding nation was overflowing the continental frontiers to gather in new territories and responsibilities, while the population grew explosively as multitudes of immigrants continued to pour into the country. It was a time of accelerating innovation in technology -- along with the growth of industrial complexes of such gigantic size and pervasive power as had never been seen before on earth. In rural, agricultural America, life was being transformed by railroads and farm machinery. In urban, industrial and commercial America, traditional ways of family living and the still immature political institutions of the young

democracy were being confronted by strange problems. Throughout the country, forces for social and political reform were working to organize farmers and industrial labors to arouse the interest and the conscience of the propertied, professional and commercial classes.

A new and complex modern society was arising, but the schools were totally unprepared to meet the challenge of this society. The American school had not developed a philosophy of its own. American educational thought was still dependent on Europe (Lilge, 1960). The realm of the classroom was totally set off from the experience of the child who inhabited it. The teacher's lessons encrusted by habit, the seats arranged in formal rows, and the rigid etiquette of behavior all emphasized the difference between school and life. Learning consisted of the tedious memorization of data without a meaning immediately clear to the pupil Handlin, 1959). These problems prompted an early development of Dewey's pedagogical principles which he stated in My Pedagogical Creed in 1897. These problems also stimulated his philosophical inquires into the nature of knowledge and his understanding of the learning process. It was this situation that he confronted, appraised and criticized almost at the outset of his career.

Along with the social and economic transition, the society was confronted with shattering scientific and philosophical precepts. The turbulence in intellectual life --- the evolutional approach in the natural sciences, experimental method in the social sciences, and James's biological psychology -- were influential factors in Dewey's development of a new synthesis of ideas. Dewey in 1910 pointed to an intellectual transformation due to Darwinian logic that "shifts from an intelligience that shaped things once and for all to the particular intelligence which things are even now shaping: shifts from an ultimate goal of good to the direct increments of justice and happiness that intelligent administration

of existent conditions may beget and that present carelessness or stupidity will destroy or forego" (Dewey, 1910). James's psychology states that organisms and environment mutually determine each other, that thinking is simply a function of the interaction between the two. It was James's objective, biological conception of mind, Said Dewey, which "worked its way more and more into all my ideas and acted as a ferment to transform old beliefs" (Dykhuizn, 1973).

JOHN DEWEY, A FIGHTER AGAINST DUALISMS

> "Dewey, like Hegel, could not tolerate dualism."
>
> -- Peters, 1981.

The key to understanding Dewey's philosophy of education, however, is not just his early experience nor the obvious point that he was a pragmatist who applied the doctrines of Charles Peirce and William James in a straightforward way to education. Rather it is the realization that he was, for a long time, a Hegelian who later became converted to pragmatism. Inspired directly by Hegel's dialectical method, Dewey approached almost every problem by identifying the dualisms or opposing view points that existed and then mounting an argument to show that both views had some truth-content but that an adequate solution was to be found only in the amalgamation of the two. Pragmatism, and especially its emphasis on scientific method, together with categories of thought extrapolated from biology, seemed to him the key to unification.

In his educational theory, Dewey's passion for unification for getting rid of dualisms, had ample scope as the title of his books indicate: The School and Society, The Child and the Curriculum, Interest and Effort in Education, Experience and Nature, Experience and Education, and so on. In

his Democracy and Education, Dewey resolved more than thirty dualisms in his typical fashion (Cleverley & Philips, 1986). The quest for unity explains why Dewey was not a wholehearted supporter of the progressive movement in America and ended up by writing his Experience and Education, which was highly critical of some its practices. It was one of the most important contributions of the American philosopher. In his writing, Dewey tried to reconcile the split between progressives and traditionalists by showing that both philosophies were vital and proper in the scheme of education.

Dewey is sometimes classified with those progressives who have extolled following the interests of the child at the expense of subject-matter. This is completely to misunderstand his position, for he was too much of a Hegelian to ignore the importance of a society's "cultural heritage" which he described as "the ripe fruitage of experience'> Dewey believed that children should learn subject-matter. "It (organized subject-matter) represents the goal toward which education should continuously move" (Dewey, 1938). As a Hegalian, he was trying to move away from the formulation of educational problems in terms of Either-Or philosophy. He stove to remove the dichotomy between both "the child" and "the curriculum", and "the school" and "the society", "the teacher' and "the child".

Which is more important to education, the child or the curriculum? Progressive would say the child with all his needs and interests should be respected above all else; personally and character, freedom and initiative, spontaneity, and change -- these are the keynotes of the progressive theme. Traditionalists, on the other hand, emphasize the curriculum, the heritage of the past, the found experiences of mankind; knowledge and information, guidance and discipline, the old and the past -- these values stream from the traditionalists. Dewey, in The Child and the Curriculum,

says both schools of thought, in their proper place are correct:

> "Abandon the notion of subject-matter as something fixed and ready made in itself, outside the child's experience; cease thinking of the child's experience as also something hard and fast; see it as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simple two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line, so the present standpoint of the child and the facts and truths of studies define instruction."

For Dewey, then both the child and the curriculum are important in the educative process. The problem is not that of choosing one or the other but devising a way to bring the child with all his experiences to understand and assimilate the wealth of our culture. Dewey insisted that the curriculum should embody what he called the sociological and the psychological principles. The sociological principles demanded that the pupil be initiated into the customs, habits, values, and knowledge which constitute the culture of a community. The psychological principles demanded that this should be done regard to the pupil's individual needs, interests, and problems.

Regarding the curriculum, Dewey stressed first of all, the importance of practical activities such as sewing, cooking, weaving, carpentry and metal work. These conformed to the sociological principles because they were basic to life, being concerned with food, clothing, etc., and thus part of the cultural heritage. They also conformed to the psychological principles for two reasons. First, Dewey was convinced that children are interested in them. Second, they embody motor activities which Dewey considered to be closely connected with mental development as a whole. Also, from an educational point of view, they were capable of providing continuity in that they could open up all sorts of other fruitful studies. As he put it, "You can concentrate the history of all mankind into the evolution of the flax, cotton, and wool fires into clothing" (Dewey, 1900).

In addition to practical activities, he included some traditional subjects in the curriculum with the proviso that they should be related to his concept of man as a problem-solving animal concerned with control over his environment. Thus he regarded geography as being of particular importance -- but as a way of gaining in power to perceive the spatial, the natural connections of an ordinary act. History was acceptable, too, as a way of recognizing the human connections (Dewey, 1916). And both, of course, must start from the child's immediate interests -- geography must move outwards from local geography and history from "some present situation with its problems" (Dewey, 1916). Science is, of course included, but subject to the same sort of provisos. It should be taught with the psychological principles in mind and start from the everyday experience of the learner. Above all, science should be taught as the agency of progress in action, for it opens up new ends as well as helping mankind to achieve existing ones. Because of science , man now "face the future with a firm belief that intelligence properly used can do away with evils once taught inevitable" (Dewey, 1916).

Finally, the curriculum should include communication skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, and foreign language. These appeared to the child's "impulses" to express himself and to share his experience with others. So the best time to teach him the techniques of communication is when the need to communicate is vitally important to him. These communication skills should be taught incidentally as the need arose.

Dewey's idea on curriculum is closely related to his thought on the child's "impulses". He stated in The School and Society (1900):

> "keeping in mind these fourfold interest -- the interest in conversation or communication: in inquiry or finding out things; in making things or construction -- we may say they are the natural resources, the uninvested

capital, upon the excise of which depends the active growth of the child."

Dewey's attempt to transcend dualisms is nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of the teaching situation. This attempt to get rid of dualisms was made explicit in his Experience and Education (1938). He pointed out that he was not suggesting a passive or spectator role for the teacher. Indeed, he argued that "basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school, and consequently more rather than less guidance by others"(Dewey, 1938). As Mayhew and Edwards (1966) observed that "Those planning the activities must see each child as an ever changing person ... They must carefully select and grade the materials used, altering such selection, as is necessary in all experimentation."

Dewey himself described this careful grading and selection of material in terms of his two criteria of educative experiences, "interaction" and "continuity". He stated forcefully that:

> "The word 'interaction' ... expressed the second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force. It assigns equal rights to both factors in experience -- objective and internal conditions. Any experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions. Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we called situation" ... and when it is said individuals live in a series of situations, "It means ... that interaction is going on between an individual and objects and other persons. The conceptions of situation and of interaction are inseparable from each other" (1938).

Dewey used the term "interaction" rather than more homely terms such as "needs" and "purposes" of the child, not purely because of his desire to create some kind of biological unity between the processes of education

and those of life but also because too many progressives had neglected the objective conditions of situations and the role of the teacher in arranging for them to match the internal conditions of the child. Similarly, "continuity" was stressed because "The central problem of education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences." and "... Every experience is a moving force. It's value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (Dewey, 1938). In Dewey's opinion, it was not sufficient for the child to be interested in anything; interests had to be explored which were rich in possibilities for future experiences or learnings.

Dewey's account of the social control of the teacher exhibited the same tendency towards unification. He tried to transcend the dichotomy between the "keeping order" view of the traditional school and the self-imposed discipline advocated by the progressives. In his Experience and Education, Dewey compared children in a classroom to their participation in a game. Games involve rules and children do not feel that they are submitting to external imposition in obeying them. "The rules are part of the game. They are not outside of it" (Dewey, 1938). The control of the actions of the participating individuals are involved in which they share and of which they are cooperative or interacting parts. "The control is social, but individuals are parts of a community, not outside of it" (Dewey, 1938).

The teacher exercises authority in such a situation as the representative and agent of the interests of the group as a whole. If the teacher has to take firm action, it is done on behalf of the interests of the group, not as an exhibition of personal power. In the traditional school the teacher had to "keep order" because order was in the teacher's keeping instead of residing in the shared work being done. In the new schools, the

main job of the teacher is to think and plan ahead so that knowledge of individuals may be married with knowledge of subject-matter that will enable activities to be selected which lend themselves to social organization. Thus "the teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities" (Dewey, 1938).

To resolve the dualism between the school and society, there were two aspects Dewey emphasized. The first dealt with the relationship of the school to the home and surrounding community, the second with its relationship to the wider society which the pupil would enter on leaving school. In the first aspect, Dewey was greatly impressed by the informal type of learning that went on at home and in the smaller community. He frequently contrasted this natural way of learning, in which there was no separation between learning and life, with the artificial drills and recitations of formal schooling. His plea was that there should be an indissoluble link between learning in school and out of school. "There are the two great things in breaking down isolation, in getting connection -- to have the child come to school with all the experience he has got outside the school, and to leave it with something to be immediately used in his everyday life" (Dewey, 1916). Dewey's insistence that the school itself should be a real community, exhibiting numerous shared interests and open communication, was his answer to the other question of the school's relationship to the wider society. The school itself should be a miniature democracy, according to him. "Democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of social living, of conjoint communicated experience " (Dewey, 1916). He saw this type of school not only as valuable in itself, because of the quality of life that it made possible, but also as the springboard to social progress. The responsibility of the school is to enhance participation in the growth of democracy and the quality of life on the common society. As he stated ,

"We may produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it gradually modify the large and more recalcitrant features of adult society" (Dewey, 1916).

JOHN DEWEY, A RESOLVER NOT PERFECT

> "Dewey needs to be corrected and modified."
>
> -- Berger, 1959.

Dewey spent much of his energy trying to resolve those dualisms, as we see above. However, he was not completely successful.

Dewey admitted the importance of making the child aware of his cultural heritage but only on the condition that he should be introduced to to it in a way which stressed its relevance to present practical and social problems. This is understandable when compared to unimaginative rote-learning of classical textbooks. But if taken seriously, it is a good recipe for failing to understand what we have inherited, for it fails to take account the degree of autonomy which some traditions of inquiry have from contemporary practical problems. Understanding depends upon entering imaginatively into the mind of those who have contributed to these traditions and grasping what their problems were. School surely, should not concern itself only with what is relevant to contemporary problems. It should also distance itself a bit from these and introduce children to speculations about the world in science, and to insights into the human condition in literature, and history, which are of fundamental significance. The dualism is there and gives rise to continuing tensions -- the contemporary vs. the traditional.

Dewey's view of the teacher, who is society's agent for the transmission and development of its cultural heritage, is also

unsatisfactory. It slurs over the dualism between the teacher's position as an authority and the legitimate demand for "participation". A teacher is not just a leader in a game. Most of the participants in a game know how to play; but pupils come to a teacher because they need to and want to know, and the teacher is meant to be, to some extent, an authority on some aspect of the culture. This disparity between teacher and how to teach makes talk of "democracy in education" problematic, unless "democracy" is watered down to mean just mutipling shared experiences and openness of communication. If "democracy" is to include, as it usually does, some suggestion of "participation" in decision-making, we are then confronted with current tensions underlying the question of how much participation is comparable with the freedom and authority of the teacher -- freedom vs. authority.

Dewey's treatment of the dualism between what he called "internal conditions" and what is the result of social influences is unsatisfactory, too. Dewey was impressed by the informal learning in the home and in the community and wanted to forge a link between this sort of learning and learning at school. But he did not ask the questions, "which home?" and "which local community?", for sociologists have cataloged the vast disparities that exist between homes in this respect. Dewey's account of the ideal educational situation assumed, to start with, an "impulse" to investigate and experiment, as well as a "social impulse" from which cooperation stems. Maybe most of the children in his Laboratory School had such impulses. Maybe all children have them at birth.

Dewey did not make explicit the difference in different levels of learning. I believe, children learn as children, but adolescents have different interests and different problems, and thus can not be taught the same way we teach children. There cannot be one method that will resolve the problems of "education". Equally important, each school needs

to understand its students' uniqueness and create a proper educational program for that school and in that time.

Besides the above, let's look at Dewey's idea of the technological, problem-solving man which is central to understanding his convictions about the methods and content of education and his conception of democracy. I believe, he developed a very onesided view of man that completely ignored certain features of the human condition. First, Dewey ignored the purely personal life of human beings. It is significant that he made practically no mention of the role of literature in education. Literature is singularly unamenable to the problem-solving method of learning, and often concerns itself with the predicaments of man rather than with his problems. Further, Dewey completely ignored the fundamental irrationality of man. He never Freud, who was a contemporary of his, and seems sublimely unaware of the human condition that derived from his insights.

In spite of these weaknesses of his work, Dewey remains a seminal figure in the history of modern educational thought. He remains a great thinker to be read, understood, and modified.

JOHN DEWEY, A THINKER WELCOMED AND ATTACKED IN CHINA

> "The encounter between John Dewey and modern China is one of the most fascinating episodes in the intellectual history of twentieth-centry China."
>
> -- Keenan, 1977.

Education has always been taken seriously in China. Knowledge of the world, the forms of society in it, and the proper relationship of these forms to each other and to the universe has nearly always been seen as the key to morality, creativity, and social and political advancement. When, in

May 1919, Chinese intellectuals were searching for constructive ways to build their country, education quite naturally became one of their chief concerns. And quite naturally, since many of the leaders of the 4 May movement had studied abroad, they turned to philosophers of education in other countries as well as their own. John Dewey was one of those philosophers. The Chinese turned to him seriously and self-consciouly as a philosopher and a teacher whose ideas might be relevant to their country.

The feeling that Chinese must look abroad no longer merely for "techniques" but even for their most basic philosophies had extended even to many who had not studied abroad. A large number of new publications offered a wide range of philosophic systems, mostly western, as alternatives to the imperial system which had been overthrown in 1919 and the Confucian outlook which was being seriously doubted and criticized by many.

Knowledge of western modes and ideas was sought chiefly in order to analyze Chinese society. The Chinese, spurned by the Versailles Peace Conference, seriously encroached on by Japan, internally divided any yielding to warlordisms at home, felt that China's position was highly dangerous. In a brief period around the 4 May Movement in 1919, they were energized by their despair into a creative intellectual ferment. the focus of their ferment seemed to be the discovery of the one "fault" in China in order to correct it. Different "faults" were pinpointed, such as the imperial system, Confucianism, the classical language and literature. Different "solutions" were proposed, but in the 1919 period most intellectuals shared the belief in some form of democracy, in a non-violent solution and in a progress based on voluntary evolution and education. This belief in education as a tool for reform could not have been sustained by the way education was being used at the time. Students

were supposed to memorize facts and to absorb morality through deep knowledge of the Confucian classics and commentaries, but initiative, innovation, and critical observation were not stressed in the Chinese examination system.

There was not much building or formal philosophizing on education in China during these years. The sense of urgency lasted through the 4 May movement but fused with it came a new absorption with Western philosophy. Thus, "It was the nature of the 4 May Movement, its despair, its rejection of past modes, its hope, its belief in the power of Chinese intellectuals to analyze and reform China correctly, and the importance it attached to education, which explains the considerable interest in John Dewey's philosophy in China" (Sizer, 1966).

All the "solutions" being proposed for China during the time had their special adherents, and the promoters of "Deweyism" were a group of Chinese intellectuals who had returned from study in the United States, and especially from Teachers College, Columbia University. It was the so-called returned students who had invited Dewey to lecture in China.

The returned students were on the whole endowed with a messianic feeling that the reform of education and the success of democracy were interwoven and were crucial to China. John Dewey was undoubtedly invited to China not only to lecture on his philosophy and to lend it to the authority of his powerful personality, but also to reinforce these returned students in their convictions and in their aspirations as leaders.

While lecturing in Japan, John Dewey received an invitation to lecture at the National University in Peking during the academic year 1919-1920. Dewey apparently took an immediate interest in China and the problems they faced and " was fascinated with the efforts of younger intellectuals to establish the first republican government in China's history" (Dykhuizen, 1973), believing that he could make a significant contribution

to the liberal movements then taking root in China. Dewey accepted the invitation, and in the end, he stayed in China for two years -- his longest stay in any foreign country (Passow, 1982).

Dewey lectured throughout China during his two-year stay there. Each of his lectures was translated into Chinese as he delivered it and his different lecture series were soon published. The Dewey lectures were reprinted in hundreds of new periodicals, and pragmatism became a significant current of thought in the political and philosophical debates that accompanied the political consciousness. Among the major competetors with Dewey's ideas for reform were the Marxist proposals -- the Chinese Communist Party was founded during the two years that Dewey was in China.

While Dewey's lectures dealt with the experimental method and philosophy, a significant portion focused on educational reform. He dealt with defining the revolution in knowledge that led to the erosion of the authority; he emphasized the child-centered curriculum, a turning away from classroom emphasis on subject-matter to emphasis on growth of the child; and he emphasized the role of socialization in the school as basic to social reform. --- "Socialization of the child should not only give him or her critical attitude towards tradition, but also develop his or her critical judgment about contemporary social and political conditions" (Hu Shih, 1919).

John Dewey's ideas were presented to China not only through written interpretations in magazines and books but also through specific actions taken by the Ministry and the educational organizations.

Of several organizations which were influenced by Dewey's thinking during the 1919-1925 period, two can be described as typical of the progress and problems involved.

The National Association for the Improvement of Education was created

in early winter of 1921 by the followers of Dewey, publishing "New Education" in order to spread modern educational principles, mostly Dewey's. The activities of the association were centered mainly on educational lobbying; its bias was for a Western, mainly American approach.

Also Dewey's influence could be reflected by the National Conference of Provincial Educational Associations. During its conference in October of 1921, among the proposals made by the conference was an expanded curriculum; based on method rather than strict subjects, expanded offerings, including new service from kindergarten through adult education, and an American-style organization of the schools themselves, with the basic pattern 6 years in elementary school, 3 in junior high, 3 in senior high and 4 in college. The policy statement issued by the Educational Conference of November 1922 clearly indicated that education should: (1) adapt itself to a new and changing society; (2) promote the spirit of democracy; (3) develop individuality; (4) take into special consideration the economic status of the average citizen; and (5) adjust education to the needs of life (Fung Yu-lan, 1948).

Dewey's techniques were adopted in somewhat isolated but dramatic ways. The Hsao Chung Normal School which was set up by Tao Chin-Hsing is an example. Tao initially conceived of it as an active extension of Dewey's philosophy. Other "Deweyian techniques" adopted included the kindergardern movement, the extension of woman's education, adult education, and professionalism in education.

As a result of his two-year stay there, Dewey's impact on China was varied. His influence on Chinese philosophical circles was only temporary. His lectures on technical philosophical subjects did not result in establishing a strong school of pragmatic thought. Chinese philosophy generally preferred the more abstract, rationalistic, comprehensive

systems of Western Europe or American traditions over the empirical, concrete, relativistic, practical philosophy of pragmatism. Eventually pragmatism became one of the least influential of the philosophical schools in China.

Dewey's influence on Chinese educational thought and practice was much more marked and enduring. After his visit, Dewey's philosophy of education became a dominant one in China. However, when Chinese Communists gained control of the country, Dewey's philosophy of education immediately became a main target of attack by those who wanted to reconstruct Chinese education along lines suggested by Communist ideology. Dewey's intellectual followers were officially denounced by Mao Tse-Tung, identifying Dewey's students with American Imperialism. A communist educator declared that, "If we want to criticize the old theories of education, we must begin with Dewey. The educational ideas of Dewey have dominated and controlled Chinese education for thirty years and his social philosophy and his general philosophy have also influenced a part of Chinese people" (Hu Shih, 1959).

The virulence of the attack on Dewey is illustrated by Chen Ho-Chin, who had been one of Dewey's ablest and devoted followers:" How was Dewey's poisonous Pragmatism educational philosophy spread over China? It was spread primarily through his lectures in China preaching his pragmatical philosophy and his reactionary educational ideas, and through that center of Dewey's reactionary thinking, namely, Columbia University, from which thousands of Chinese students, for over thirty years, have brought back all the reactionary, subject-idealistic, pragmatic educational ideas of Dewey. ... As one who has been most deeply poisoned by his reactionary educational ideas, as one who has worked hardest and longest to help spread his educational ideas, I now publicly accuse that great fraud and deceiver in the modern history of education, JOHN

DEWEY!"(Chen, 1955).

During the intellectual campaign denouncing Dewey's influence educationally and politically, there was literally a flood of articles and even book-length critiques of Dewey's ideas. The reasons for this are very complicated. Mainly, it is because Dewey's ideas were contradictory to Communist ideology and Marxism which the Chinese Party adhered to. As Keenan(1977) observed:

"The fundamental incompatibilities of Dewey's pragmatism and the socialist needs of Mao's China, which were developed in these critiques, centered upon Dewey's piecemeal definition of the nature of science and, as importantly, upon his assumption that class definitions could be subsumed within the operation of "Democracy" in society. This latter "error" was considered by his critics to be greatest oversight of the bourgeois educator and his Chinese follower."

Whether Dewey has been treated fairly or not is not extremely important, but what is imperative is that we should study him deeply and understand him correctly. Politics is not the only standard to judge a person who lived and matured in a specific society different from ours.

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